

MAY, JOAN
(ARTIST)

DRAWER 19A

Artist - M

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Artists of Abraham Lincoln portraits

Joan May

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
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—News Photos by Howard Shirkey

DETROIT artist Joan May completes the last of six painting on the life of Lincoln for an Illinois supermarket.

By JANET CLARK
News Special Writer

Joan May is an artist who likes to paint big.

Six huge paintings depicting the life of Abraham Lincoln are being completed by the Detroit commercial and interior designer.

Painted on wooden panels the series is part of an interior design for an A&P supermarket in Springfield, Ill., where Lincoln was born.

THE LINCOLN paintings average seven feet.

This love for large mural type paintings has led Joan to paint the sides of trailer trucks, and walls up to one hundred feet.

Joan started her career as an automotive designer. Deciding she would rather paint, she approached supermarkets with her ideas, in hopes of designing their walls.

WHEN SHE first started, she says, she was the only one

Super (market) artist —Detroiter paints big

doing that sort of thing. Now she and her husband, Donald, own one of the three studios competing for the supermarket and department store business in the Detroit area.

"It's a funny business, Joan says. "A few years ago supermarkets were stereotyped. Now everybody wants their own look. It's all custom, with themes to coincide with the surrounding area."

The Mays do a lot of research before their ideas become designs. It's often like a history lesson, she says.

"WHEN I finish reading, I have a problem choosing which moments in history I want to bring out. I get so involved it's like stepping into the era."

Her themes have ranged from quaint Hans Christian Anderson villages to the racing chariots of Rome.

On completion of the Lincoln series, she starts a Christopher Columbus series for the interior of a supermarket in Columbus, Ohio.

A native of Los Angeles, Joan moved to Detroit as a child. She opened Debarr Stu-

dios in 1954, handling the interior design for such companies as J. L. Hudson, Farmer Jack, Wrigley and Cunningham's.

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